

# Zip Code Project

*Reconnecting Youth,  
One Zip Code at a Time*



[www.azed.gov/zipcode](http://www.azed.gov/zipcode)

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*Alicia M. Douglas*  
Superintendent of Public Instruction



# Overview

The **Zip Code Project** is an initiative by the Arizona Department of Education dedicated to creating opportunities for disconnected youth ages 16-24 that are neither employed nor attending school, so that they can succeed in life.



**1** in **5** young adults in Arizona are disconnected

## Community Solutions

The aim of the project is to generate *solutions for the Community by the Community*. **Community Groups of Action** composed of a diverse mix of community leaders will identify solutions to their local challenges.

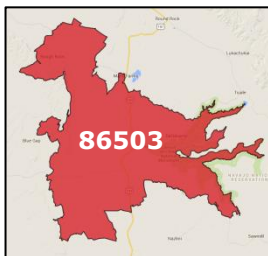


The following criteria were used to select the initial target zip codes:

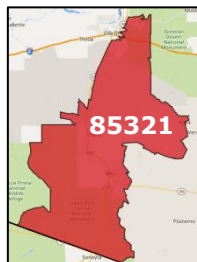
- Geographic Areas/Population Type
  - High Density Native American population
  - Rural community
  - Urban communities
- Within those areas, the following criteria was used to select the target zip codes:
  - Percent of 16-24 year olds who are unemployed
  - Percent of 16-24 year olds not attending school

## Community Focus

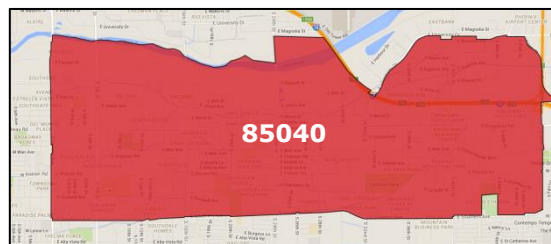
Four high needs communities were selected for the first cohort. The disconnected youth in each of the four selected Zip Codes face different barriers to education and workforce, providing the opportunity for community-specific solutions.



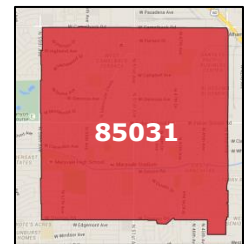
Chinle, AZ



Ajo, AZ



South Phoenix

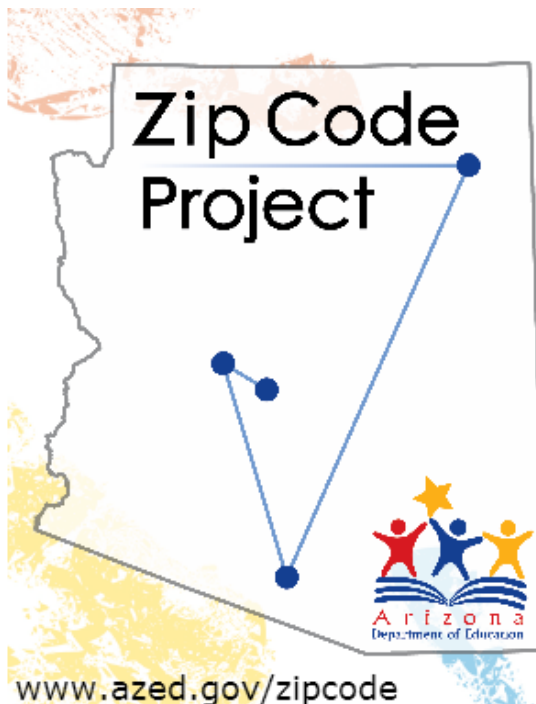


Maryvale/West Phoenix

# What is the Zip Code Project?

The Zip Code Project is an initiative by the Arizona Department of Education dedicated to assisting disconnected youth ages 16-24 that are neither employed nor attending school. The goal is to find them opportunities so they can succeed in life. This vulnerable population needs our greatest attention. Unfortunately, the numbers of disconnected youth are increasing. Nationally one in seven youth ages 16-24 are disconnected; while in Arizona that number is a staggering one in five. The negative effects are felt across the economy, society, and the criminal justice system.

The Zip Code Project will develop Community Groups of Action in each target zip code to help these youth find educational or workforce opportunities and resources, provide referrals to important services, and secure grant funding. The Zip Code Project aims to help lead Arizona in the mission to overcome and end youth disconnection; one young person at a time.



**Zip Code Project**

**“It is impossible for our education system to prepare students to be successful citizens if they are not attending school.**

**All children, regardless of where they live, deserve a chance to pursue the American dream.**

**Our mission with the Zip Code Project is to help these young adults get back on the path to a successful, happy and productive life.”**

**–Superintendent Diane Douglas**

[www.azed.gov/zipcode](http://www.azed.gov/zipcode)

# Who are Disconnected Youth?

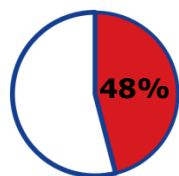
## **Disconnected Youth** /diskə'nektəd yōŌTH/

Define: Young people ages 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school.

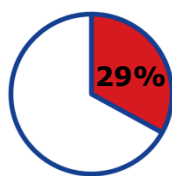
See also: opportunity youth

Associated with: homelessness, school dropout, juvenile justice, teenage pregnancy, running away, mental or physical disability, immigration status and more.

The term 'disconnected' youth can sometimes be misinterpreted as just high school dropouts or those unable to find work. This is not always the case. There are many disconnected youth who have received their high school diploma or equivalent, but are not continuing their education or working.



Received high school diploma or equivalent



Dropped out of high school

## **Determine if an individual is considered "Disconnected Youth"**

**Y N**

1) ☐ ☐ Are they between the ages of 16 and 24?

- If yes, move to question number 2
- If no, they are not considered "disconnected youth"

**Y N**

2) ☐ ☐ Are they currently attending school? (K-12 or post-secondary)

- If yes, they are not considered "disconnected youth"
- If no, move to question number 3

**Y N**

3) ☐ ☐ Are they currently working?

- If yes, they are not considered "disconnected youth"
- If no, **this is a disconnected youth!**

Disconnected youth are a diverse population. The reasons for disconnection have been attributed to many factors, such as:



Homelessness /  
Runaways



Teenage  
Pregnancy



Mental or Physical  
Disability



Immigration  
Status



Juvenile  
Justice

## **Disconnected Youth Statistics**

### **US Disconnected Youth Fiscal Impact**



More than **\$25 Billion** annually

### **Dropout Impact on Arizona**



Each dropout produces **\$421,280** in economic losses over their lifetime.

### **Disconnection Rate**



1 in 7 nationally



1 in 5 in Arizona

Source: Measure of America and Arizona  
Mayors Education Round Table

# Five Year Plan

Vision: All youth will have the ability to stay engaged and on track to succeed in education, career, and life.

Mission: We mobilize the power of community collaboration and best practices to help navigate the complex education system for the most at-risk youth in the State.

FY18

- Increase the number of communities served by three zip codes (7 total)
- Produce dropout prevention toolkits for LEAs, youth, and families
- Launch the Arizona Disconnected Youth Resource Network
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

FY19

- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes (9 total)
- At least double the information provided in the initial dropout prevention toolkits
- Launch a Parent and Family Summit to convene multiple parent groups to discuss youth disconnection and dropout prevention
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

FY20

- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of three zip codes (12 total)
- Increase the number of resources provided in the dropout prevention toolkits
- Convene a follow-up to the FY19 Parent and Family Summit
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

FY21

- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes (14 total)
- Launch a dropout prevention summit to include a variety of stakeholders with strands dedicated to assisting LEA staff and parents/families. This summit will feature youth who have been at-risk but succeeded at completing school and have moved on to college/career.
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

FY22

- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes in order to reach each county within the state of Arizona (16+ total)
- Convene the FY22 Parent and Family Summit
- Publish a catalog of additional resources dedicated to ending youth disconnection
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

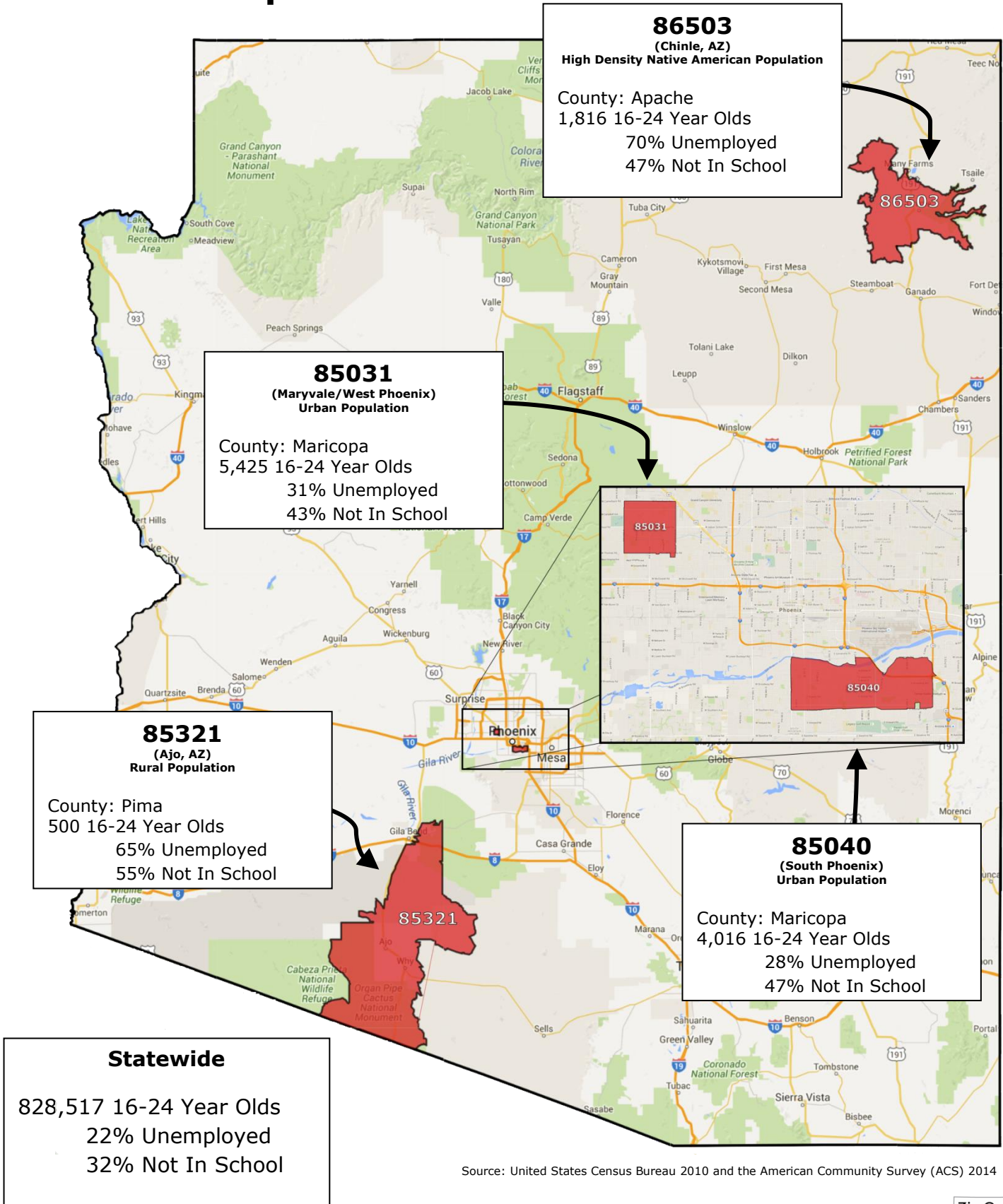
FY23+

- Launch phase two of the Zip Code Project
- Heavy focus placed on the schools within high-risk areas around Arizona
- Key priority will be the implementation of Education Development Zones
- Continue the hard work being done to help disconnected youth and dropout prevention





# Selected Zip Codes



# Community Groups of Action

## Purpose of the Community Groups of Action:



- Identify community-specific relatable concerns, issues, or areas of growth
- Identify solutions to the concerns, issues, or areas of growth
- When possible, assist the Zip Code Project in implementing the identified solutions

## Community Sectors Invited:



### Education:

- Middle Schools
- High Schools
- Charter Schools
- Community Colleges
- Universities
- Private Colleges
- Adult Education



### Business:

- Small Businesses
- Corporations
- National Chains
- Sports Teams



### Non-Profit:

- Local Charity
- Food Banks
- Social Assistance
- Grant Funders
- Community Health Centers



### Elected Officials:

- Tribal leaders
- Mayors
- State Representatives
- State Senators
- City Council Members
- County Superintendents



### Government Services:

- DES Offices
- Libraries
- Community Centers
- One Stops



### Family:

- Biological Parents
- Adoptive Parents
- Foster Family
- Sibling Caretakers
- Extended Family

**86503 CGA**

(Chinle, AZ)

**LAUNCHED  
JULY 2016**

**85321 CGA**

(Ajo, AZ)

**LAUNCHED  
SEPTEMBER 2016**

**85031 & 85040**

**CGA(s)**

(West and South Phoenix)

**COMING SOON**



# Current Partnerships

Organization	Type	Zip Code
<b>A For Arizona</b>	Non-Profit	All
<b>C.O.R.E</b>	Non-Profit	85040, 85031
<b>Chinle Unified School District</b>	LEA	86503
<b>City of Phoenix</b>	Government	85040, 85031
<b>City of Phoenix – Parks and Recreation</b>	Government	85040, 85031
<b>EAGLE College Prep: Maryvale</b>	LEA	85031
<b>Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith, and Family</b>	Government	All
<b>Hope College and Career Readiness Academy</b>	LEA	85040
<b>International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA)</b>	Non-Profit	85321
<b>Las Artes School</b>	LEA	85321+
<b>Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG)</b>	Non-Profit/Gov’t	All
<b>Maricopa County Education Service Agency</b>	Government	85040, 85031
<b>Maricopa County Regional School District</b>	LEA	85040, 85031
<b>Opportunities for Youth Leadership Council</b>	Multi-Sector	85040, 85031
<b>Opportunity Nation</b>	Non-Profit	All
<b>Pima County Community Action Agency (One-Stop)</b>	Non-Profit	85321+
<b>United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona</b>	Non-Profit	85321+
<b>Valley of the Sun United Way</b>	Non-Profit	85040, 85031
<b>Youth on the Rise</b>	Non-Profit	85321+

We are also collaborating with:

- **ACYR, Arizona Call-A-Teen**
- **Arizona State University**
- **AZ Department of Economic Security**
- **College Depot**
- **Expect More Arizona**
- **Friendly House**
- **Genesis Academy**
- **Genesis City**
- **Grand Canyon University**
- **Linkedin**
- **Maricopa County Workforce Development**
- **Phoenix Union High School District**
- **Tri Caucus**
- **Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development**
- **West-Mec**
- **Year Up**

If you are interested in partnering or collaborating on a project related to disconnected youth, please contact us!

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# Additional Resources

## MCESA

Maricopa County Education Service Agency

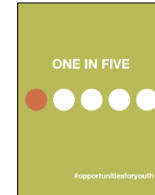


### Opportunities for Youth

*Connecting youth with meaningful education and career opportunities.*

**Vision:** Harness the power of cross-sector collaboration to create a comprehensive system of opportunity that re-engages our Valley's disconnected youth.

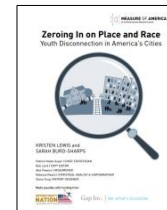
**Mission:** Youth will be successfully re-engaged and on track for success in college, career, and life.



Visit them at: [Education.maricopa.gov/connect](http://Education.maricopa.gov/connect)



**Mission:** Our mission is to provide easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in America and to stimulate face-based dialogue about the issues we all care about.

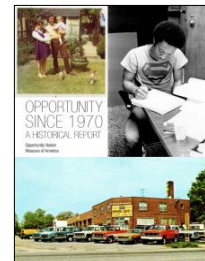


Visit them at: [measureofamerica.org](http://measureofamerica.org)

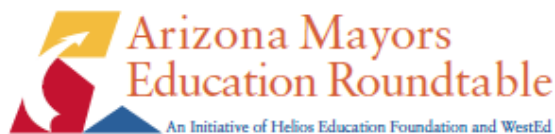


Opportunity Nation is a bipartisan, national campaign comprised of more than 350 cross-sector organizations working together to expand economic mobility and close the opportunity gap in America.

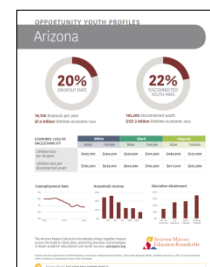
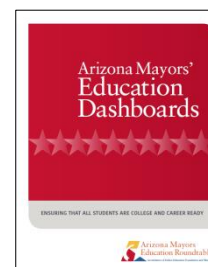
**Mission:** Opportunity Nation's mission is to restore the promise of the American Dream by ensuring that all Americans – regardless of where they were born – have the opportunity to thrive.



Visit them at: [opportunitynation.org](http://opportunitynation.org)



The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable, a WestEd initiative, brings together mayors of Arizona's larger cities, district superintendents, and their key staff to share data, evidence-based and promising practices, and programmatic strategies that can help address local challenges affecting students' educational and career success.



Visit them at: [azmayors.org](http://azmayors.org)



